SOME NEW BOOKS.

A New Life of Martin Luther.

There has been some good work done by the contributors to "The New Plutarch" series, now publishing by the Putnams, but the volume devoted to *Martin Luther* has this advantage over its companions, that it meets a want widely and deeply felt in English literature. When we bear in mind the importance of the movement in which Luther was prime agent, the eventful course of his public life, and his interesting character, it is surprising what meagre sources of information regarding the man and his work have heretofore been open to the English reader. If we except the article written by Bunsen for the Encyclopedia Britannica and the translation by Hazlitt of Michelet's biography, and the German compilation entitled "Luther's Table Talk," there have been almost no materials in English with the help of which we could form an accurate and vivid conception of the great German reformer. The author of the present volume, Mr. JOHN H. TREADWELL, has availed himself of the light thrown on the subject by historical as well as biographical writers of Germany, and has wisely consulted the opponents as well as the eulogists of Luther. The result is that his monograph gives us a full and clear account of the man in his private and public life, and accurately defines his relation to the religious movement of his own time, and to subsequent phases of the Protestant schism.

In a chapter allotted to a sketch of pre-Lutheran Germany, Mr. Treadwell mentions the curious fact that during the ninth century one Otfried of Weissenburg translated the gospel into German verse "in order that the people might read it," thus giving in the same words the same reason for his performance that Wyckliffe was to assign five centuries later for his analogous undertaking. Strange to say, however, the author, in his account of the gradual awakening of independent thought in Germany, which, instead of beginning, should be said to have culminated in Luther, does not so much as mention Jerome of Prague, and gives but three lines to John Huss. Mr. Treadwell, however, is careful to point out that in the bosom of the Church itself, and among the learned doctors whose treatises were certain to engage the attention of the student, there had been men whose teachings differed widely from those inculcated by Rome at the beginning of the sixteenth century, and were, indeed, not far removed from the views of the reformers. Conspicuous among these was William of Occam, the English disciple of Scotus, who, while in France, upheld the national Government in its struggle against papal usurpation, and who stoutly maintained the right of the individual judgment to determine for itself the validity of prevailing dogmas. It is certain that Luther was a close student of Occam, whose principles were early engrafted upon his mind. It is well to remember, too, that Wittenberg University, in which Luther was subsequently a professor, had been founded by the Elector of Saxony in 1502, when the future reformer was but 19 years old, and that it differed from all other universities in Germany, in that it was not exclusively devoted to the inculcation of dogma, but gave large scope in its curriculum to secular learning. The creation of such an institution, although an isolated fact, indicates the considerable extent to which the new intellectual craving had already made itself felt.

It is the fashion to say that German scholarship springs from the loins of peasants, as if only the robust health thus inherited would support the strain imposed by an incomparable industry. The generalization is too hasty, as the cases of the Schlegels, the Humboldts, Bunsen, and a multitude of other exceptions attest. But the rule holds good of Martin Luther, whose father was a peasant of Upper Saxony, and whose mother was a serving maid employed in the public baths. There was a tradition that Hans Luther, the father, had committed homicide in an altercation with a fellow peasant who chanced to trespass on his farm. At all events, he was obliged to leave his native village and move to Eisleben, where soon afterward—probably on St. Martin's Eve, Nov. 10, 1483—his son Martin was born. Before the boy was a year old his parents moved to Mansfeld, where the father gradually came out of the cloud of adversity, became a town councillor, and the owner of two small iron furnaces, on which accession of good fortune depended his ability to give his son an education. It seems to have been an exceptionally austere household, and the family sceptre, a birch rod, was wielded mercilessly by both parents, no matter how trivial the offence. For the theft of a hazlenut Martin's mother whipped him till the blood came, and at school he was one day treated fifteen times to the rod. "My parents," he wrote many years afterward, "treated me cruelly, so that I became timid. They sincerely believed that they were right, but they had no discernment of character, which is absolutely necessary in order that we may know when, on whom, and how punishment should be inflicted." We may remark, in passing, that no one except Martin himself was ever able to discern the trait of timidity in his character. Whatever may have been Luther's disapproval of the harsh treatment to which he was subjected in childhood, he did not fail in after years to speak of his parents with affection and reverence, and it is interesting to note how he consecrates their memory by inserting their names in his formula of marriage—"Hans, wilt thou take Gretha?" On the death of his father he wrote to Melancthon: "It is my pious duty to weep for him whom the Father of Mercy destined to give me birth—for him by whose labor and sweat God nourished me and made me what I am, such as that is."

Luther was six years old, and already quick at his books, when he was sent to school at Eisenach, but the utmost his father could then do for him was to let him have the use of his time, instead of binding him out as an apprentice. He could give his son no money, who, accordingly, had to pay his way by singing before the doors of patrician houses and asking alms. This was literally a beggar's life; but, looking back on it long afterward, through a mist of years that effaced the hungry hours and the heartburnings, Luther speaks of "Eisenach, my own dear Eisenach." Here Luther seems to have spent eight or ten years studying grammar, rhetoric, and poetry with the rector of a convent, one Trebonius, who, it is plain from the single anecdote preserved of him, had the knack of teaching his scholars self-respect as well as respect for himself. "I uncover my head," he used to say, "to honor the consuls, chancellors, doctors, masters, who shall one day proceed from this school." The somewhat improved circumstances of his father by and by encouraged the young scholar to further advancement, and assisted him to keep his terms at Erfurt University, where, in 1502, he obtained the degree of Bachelor in Philosophy. Among the circumstances which helped to give direction to his mind should be mentioned the fact that at Erfurt he was under the instruction of John Greventstein, who declaimed vigorously against the execution of Huss, and Gerard Hecker, an Augustine monk, who afterward turned Protestant. The Erfurt library, moreover, was one of the best of its time, and here Luther read Virgil, Cicero, and other Latin authors of the classical period. With the schoolmen, of course, he was already tolerably familiar. An omnivorous reader, and accustomed to impose on his memory the task of treasuring the contents of many volumes—for at that [illegible] a poor man could not expect to own books—he at length fell seriously ill, and was carried home to Mansfeld a genuine victim to the fascination of study. It was during his convalescence that his mind seems to have turned away from the profession of the law, for which his father had intended him, and to have looked toward a more secluded life in which he would have ample time for the studies which engrossed him. The resolutions then formed were carried out in 1505 when he entered the Augustine Monastery at Erfurt, after passing, characteristically enough, the preceding evening in the jovial company of his fellow students. Once inside the walls, Martin Luther, by way of [illegible] his love and con-stant reading of the most eminent among the Christian fathers, assumed the name of Augustine. Few men of his time, says the present biographer, were better calculated to imitate the qualities and reënact the rôle of his self-chosen namesake. His father, however, was not by any means convinced that his son had recognized his true vocation. "God grant," he wrote, "that you may not have mistaken a delusion of the devil for a sign from heaven." His conventual superiors, too, seem to have been annoyed by the lofty aspirations and intellectual pride of the young scholar. They decided that the youth must be humiliated, and accordingly doomed him to become a scullion and drudge, now wielding a broom, now winding the convent clock, now trudging from house to house with the tribute bag, and now, like a pack mule, bearing burdens to and from the convent. After two years of this degrading service he was ordained, but, meanwhile, the studies which he continually prosecuted and the reputation which they gave him could not be hidden within convent walls, and in 1508 he was called to the professorship of philosophy in Wittenberg University.

At Wittenberg the oratorical faculty, which seems to have distinguished Luther from an early age, had full scope. His strong rich voice, his singular gift of persuasion, and his unaffected sincerity put him forward at once as the first orator of his land and time. Before he was five-and-twenty his name was known in every city of letters and learning. He soon, however, began to disclose the originality of his mind by avowing his aversion to the philosophical system which the school men had reared upon the principles laid down by Aristotle. One of his friends becoming involved in difficulties for professing the same opinions, it became necessary that some one should defend him at Rome, and Luther was selected for the office. The date of this expedition is uncertain, and only a meagre record is left of the toilsome journey which Luther performed on foot in the capacity of a mendicant friar. With all his learning he was not free from the superstitious awe with which his countrymen regarded the power, splendor, and supposed supernatural endowments of the Italians. Among his notes of travel he records that "the Italian only requires you to look into a mirror to be able to kill you; he can deprive you of all your senses by means of secret poisons." With amusing soberness he discourses concerning some of the conferences which he held with evil spirits on the road. If we are to believe him, a legion of devils were at his heels continually, and neither rhetoric nor invective succeeded in dispersing them. The sincere young German was deeply pained by the loose principles and worse than loose practices of his brethren in Italian convents; and as he was outspoken in rebuke, his treatment in Rome was anything but cordial. He remained there only a fortnight, but the impression which he got he carried with him to the end of his days. In 1512 he is back again in Wittenberg, having returned no meek and submissive pilgrim, to rehearse the praises of Italy, but full of indignation which he does not hesitate to express. "I would not," he says, "have missed seeing Rome for a hundred thousand florins; I feel justified now in many statements that I have made; fears which I entertained are more than strengthened; there are bad doings in Rome." Soon after his return he had conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity, the charges of the ceremony, which were much beyond the capacity of his own purse, being advanced by the Elector of Saxony, now become an ardent friend of the young theologian. He was henceforth in a position to speak with more authority; his words sounded further and sank deeper. "He was at this time," says Mr. Treadwell, "the type of a perfect manhood; of medium stature, squarely built, with a round small head, and eyes like a falcon's. His voice was rich and powerful, and his manner that of a man absorbed in the work before him." His detractors attributed part of his power over men to frenzy, which they failed, apparently, to distinguish from a vehement enthusiasm. Naturally passionate, he often rose in debate or exhortation to the climax of bitterness, and hurled at the heads of his opponents such violent abuse that nothing short of rancorous resentment on their part could be expected. Thoughts flew out of his mind, he tells us, like sparks from iron under the stroke of the hammer; and if we may believe him, he never worked better than when inspired by anger. How far he was, however, from depending on mere invective will appear from the new course of study which he at once began after receiving the degree of Doctor in theology. Hitherto the only languages with which he had been familiar were his own and the Latin; now, urged by a desire for a thorough knowledge of the Bible, he undertook to master Greek and Hebrew, incited to them probably by the example of Erasmus.

It was on the night of Oct. 31, 1517 (Hallow Eve), that Luther took his first overt step against Rome by walking through the streets alone and nailing upon the gates of the parochial church at Wittenberg a series of propositions, ninety-five in number, nearly every article of which was levelled against the sale of papal indulgences and the promoters of the trade in Germany. Now, there was nothing in this act which should necessarily lead to a schism in the Church, for not long before Cardinal Ximenes had prevented the sale of indulgences in Spain. Luther expected, indeed, to be fiercely denounced by the agents who profited by the indulgence traffic in Germany, but he did not himself believe that the Pope would uphold them in the face of public protest. "To show the world," says Luther, "the character of these men, and protect the people from their machinations, I wrote to Pope Leo a most submissive letter. I may err, but a heretic I will not be." There is no doubt that Leo X. at first made light of the affair, and charged it to "monkish quarrelling and too much wine. When they get sober again," he added, "they will repent of it, for Fra Luther is a man of fine genius."

With the events which followed rapidly in the conflict between Luther and the Vatican after the sword was drawn by the attack upon indulgences—the summons to Augsburg, the disputation with Dr. Eck, the Diet at Worms, the Augsburg Conference—most readers are familiar, and we need not dwell upon those portions of the book which set them forth. It is the capital merit of this volume that it explains Luther's astonishing success by exhibiting with adequate minuteness and emphasis the preparation which qualified the Protestant champion for the unequal contest. Another creditable feature is the candor and completeness with which the author discloses Luther's perplexities and doubts. He makes it plain that the final dedication of the man's energies to the work of uncompromising reform hinged largely upon circumstances which, if not absolutely fortuitous, were at any rate independent of his own control. It is difficult, indeed, if we eliminate altogether the agency of accident, to account for the triumph of Protestantism in North Germany, or at all events for its early development in that country. There were signs, indeed, as we have said, of an intellectual awakening even there; but for the existence of a new force in the atmosphere Luther could not have executed, if he could have conceived, his plans—for the indications of free thought were far less widespread and striking in Germany than in France and Italy. In the Italian peninsula, to be sure, the Renaissance had ripened the minds of men so rapidly that they seem to have been swept past the point where we care for the reformation of religions and to have been prematurely landed in sheer indifferentism and infidelity. In France, on the other hand, the conditions were peculiarly favorable, and we cannot doubt that an observer, surveying western Europe in the year 1517, would have discerned a far more promising field for a great religious movement on the western than on the eastern side of the Rhine. What was wanting, however, in the intellectual ripeness of his countrymen, was to be compensated by the indefatigable, indomitable, irresistible energy of Luther's propaganda. When we measure accurately the obstacles and agencies with which he had to cope, the resources at his command, and the breadth and solidity of his achievement, we must acknowledge that the victory gained by Luther in his lifetime has been seldom paralleled in the history of religions, and that it is ascribable in a degree quite exceptional to the force of the man's character. In other words, it is doubtful, if we exclude the personality of Luther as a factor in the problem, whether the Protestant uprising in Germany might not have been considerably delayed, and whether it would ever have gained sufficient headway to resist the tremendous effort which well nigh crushed it in the first part of the Thirty Years' War.

Mr. Treadwell is careful to demonstrate how uncertain for a time it was whether Luther's personality would be thrown into the scale in the impending grapple of Protestantism with the Papacy. Had the discreet course suggested by the Pope himself been followed by the zealous and interested partisans of Rome in Germany, it is quite possible that Luther would have gone on with his professor's duties at Wittenberg, and continued all his days in communion with the Church. The prospect of a sanguinary conflict dismayed him, and he shrank from the responsibility of plunging the Christian world in tumult. He was nearly on the point of retreating from the position he had taken in regard to the indulgence traffic, and he probably would have done so had not the gauntlet he had thrown down been suddenly and furiously caught up. Such howlings and ravings burst forth from every side as would have driven a more timid man insane with terror. He was not a man to stand a passive target for all the weapons of detraction, invective, hatred, and contempt. He was not distinguished for the meek and diluted virtue misnamed pious submission. Luther became mad, righteously mad, and hurled back such vehement and fiery rejoinders that the whole firmament of letters and theology was ablaze with a new light. Instinct assumed ascendancy over the usually self-masterful man. In the heat and stress of conflict his faculties acquired new energy, his mind awoke to larger issues, till from the desperate struggle for self-preservation emerged the champion of Reform.

One of the foolish charges with which Luther's enemies have sought to traduce his motives is based upon his marriage, and insinuates that he was impelled to abjure his monkish vows of fidelity to the Church of Rome by his sensual appetites. The very accusation carries implicit testimony to Luther's conscientiousness. Unless restrained by scruples of conscience, no monk would have deemed it necessary, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, to forsake the Church in order to enjoy carnal pleasures, when he looked about him and beheld the openly licentious living practised by the Italian hierarchy, and sedulously imitated by the Prince Bishops of Mayence, Cologne, and Treves. There is no doubt that Luther was a man of strong affections; he loved his men friends, and wrote to them such warm and tender words as surprise the reader who has thought of him only in his polemical capacity. It had been the cherished hope of his father, before his son had taken monastic vows against his will, that Martin should perpetuate the family name. Luther himself tells us that he had been three times in love, yet he maintained his vows of celibacy up to the forty-second year of his age, when he met Catharine von Bora, who had been a sister in the convent of Nempsch, and whom he married in June, 1525. They went to live together on a small farm which he had purchased at Zeilsdorf, where, with "my Eve, my empress, my rib Ketha," he passed two quiet and happy years.

Posterity knows Luther only as a stern master of men; but those who were contemporary with and lived nearest to him knew him as a man of genuine humor and joviality, spontaneously social, even convivial, ready with song and story to encourage the mirth of his companions. Mr. Treadwell reminds us that the same intelligence which dictated the memorable hymn "Ein feste Burg," translated "Æsop's Fables," and framed also the famous couplet:

> "Wer nicht liebt Wein Weib und Gesang,
> Der bleibt ein Narr sein Leben lang."

Melancthon, who probably enjoyed a closer intimacy with Luther than any of his friends, says: "Whoever knew him and his habits will agree that he was an admirable man, soft and genial in his moments of companionship, not dogmatic nor loving disputes." But although it may be true that Luther was neither querulous nor disputatious in private life, it is certain that he had a genius for becoming entangled in polemical and political quarrels. The two traits are not incompatible. It was his nature not to measure with nice care the weight and bearing of his language, so long as the substance of the thought was true and just; and the obduracy and harshness with which he was accustomed to maintain whatever he had once asserted touching matters of great public moment came partly from his training, but more from intensity of conviction.

The English Citizen.

Nobody needs to be told that the British Constitution is not to be found described in any written instrument, and we may venture to add that there are not 5,000 persons in the British islands, including members of Parliament and the wearers of the ermine, who can reasonably pretend to understand it. How, then, should the average British subject, much less an American, hope to comprehend that of which there exists nowhere an explicit and authoritative definition, that which like the tides is subject to mysterious impulses of action and reaction, that which under the normal impact of its chief motors may mean one thing to-day, and under the sudden resurrection of dormant prerogative, may mean another thing to-morrow? Evidently the British Constitution was not susceptible of the same definition in 1830, when William IV. assented to the passage of the first Reform bill, and even to an extensive creation of new Peers to secure the adoption of that measure; and again in 1834, when the same sovereign dismissed Lord Melbourne and his colleagues, although their Ministry was supported by a majority of the House of Commons. Manifestly, too, the relations and the equilibrium of forces in the British polity could not be stated in the same terms on the day before and the day after that on which Mr. Gladstone abolished by royal warrant the system of purchase in the army, a step which Parliament had been asked and had refused to sanction. In view of these inconsistencies, these fluctuations, these evolutions—which can be corrected or explained by the text of no written document, but which depend on past facts, present facts, and the drift of opinion and circumstance which may have still stranger facts in store—how shall the British subject, who must live and act under this Constitution, inscrutable as it may seem to him, obtain some knowledge touching its past history, and the arrangement of its dynamic and its structural elements as they apparently exist at the present moment? The answer may seem obvious enough, though it is doubtful whether a workingman or a man of business, whose time is limited, and whose habits are not studious, will find it satisfactory. Let him read, a college professor will tell him, Freeman's history in order to trace the germs of the modern English Constitution in the Anglo-Saxon and Norman institutions; let him follow their earlier modifications and gradual development under the Plantagenet kings in the work of Stubbs; he may then take up the constitutional history of Hallam and the treatise of Erskine May, after which he will find much light thrown on the actual state of things by Bagehot's essays. Now, as to this programme, which may probably be discovered in the curriculum of any first-rate university, we need only say that it involves some of the hardest intellectual labor that can be expended on any subject. There are many important points on which no two of the writers named agree with one another, and each of them advances some propositions which are open to grave question, and which are liable to be refuted at any moment by new facts, the British Constitution being one of those awkward problems which—solvitur ambulando—solves itself as it runs on. To us it seems as ridiculous to recommend such a course of study to the average British voter as it would be to suggest that no young woman should go to see the Greek play about to be presented in New York till she had mastered all the dramas of Sophocles, Æschylus, and Euripides in their original tongue.

"You have got your Reform bill," said Mr. Lowe, when the second expansion of the franchise had been sanctioned by the House of Commons; "now let us see you educate your voter." It is somewhat late to begin, and it is to be regretted that the series of short and lucid treatises on political topics projected by the Messrs. Macmillan, and bearing the general title of *The English Citizen*, was not placed in the hands of the electors fifteen years ago. It is, so far as we know, the first intelligent and effective effort toward the political education of the new electorate. The aim of the collection is to meet the demand for accessible information concerning the ordinary conditions and current terms of English political life. We are glad to say that if the rest of the series is on a level as regards either the substantive contents or literary treatment with the initial volume, called *Central Government*, by Mr. H. D. TRAILL, their purpose will be fully answered. We do not hesitate, indeed, to express the opinion that Mr. Traill's volume will be found no less serviceable to many members of Parliament than to their constituents.

Mr. Traill's book differs from Mr. Bagehot's volume of essays on the same subject in this respect, that while his data are presented in a far more concise form, he nevertheless finds room for treating in some detail interesting and important subjects which Mr. Bagehot almost wholly overlooked. The latter practically confined himself to the central impelling force of the British polity, to the dynamic elements of the governmental machine, and was disposed to disregard the structural or static elements of the Constitution, those channels through which the propelling energy is forced to exhibit and expend itself. That Mr. Traill does not omit to explain those features of the British system neglected by Mr. Bagehot, will appear from a mere enumeration of the subjects to which chapters are devoted. Thus, after discussing the executive government under the British Constitution, and the origin, functions, and responsibility of the Cabinet, he proceeds to treat with some minuteness of "The Treasury," of the "Home Office," of the "Foreign Office," the "Colonial Office," the "War Office," the "India Office," the "Admiralty," the "Board of Trade," the "Local Government Board," the "Education Department," and other executive offices. This terse yet sufficiently exhaustive study of the British administrative on the structural side is followed by an interesting essay on the tendencies toward centralization of government in England. We need not say that this is one of the most profound and pregnant topics connected with British politics, of far more moment, indeed, in its relations to the ultimate welfare of the community than most of the questions which determine the success or the defeat of parties. Mr. Traill considers it beyond the province of this particular work to pronounce any opinion on the policy or impolicy of the centralizing course upon which the British nation seems to have definitely entered, but he is careful to point out with adequate distinctness and completeness in what way and to what extent it has already operated to extend the functions of the central Administration, and thereby, we may add, to paralyze the traditional habit of local self-government.

Antietam and Fredericksburg.

In noticing Mr. Ropes's contribution to the series of monographs on the "Campaigns of our Civil War," now publishing by the Scribners, we expressed a hope that succeeding volumes might be executed with equal skill, circumspection, and judicial impartiality. We are happy to say that the desired conditions are, in some respects, fulfilled by the latest addition to the series, entitled *The Antietam and Fredericksburg*, by F. W. PALFREY. Regarded, indeed, merely from a literary point of view, Gen. Palfrey's is the more vivid, spirited, and highly finished performance. Unlike his predecessor, he has not contented himself with amassing and sifting materials for the future historian, and pronouncing merely such tentative and provisional judgments as seem irresistibly called forth by the facts recited. He is not satisfied with presenting his data in a concise and clear, but arid and colorless, compendium; he has wrought them into a smooth, flowing narrative, which is always graphic, sometimes charged with a dramatic intensity, and occasionally fraught with sincere and contagious feeling. We are not so sure that the judgments he pronounces on the merit of strategical and tactical operations, and on the conduct and abilities of various commanders, will commend themselves so forcibly to cautious readers as did those of Mr. Ropes. The latter never overlooked the fact that he had undertaken to describe a particular campaign, and to state only such opinions as might legitimately be based on the data cited, and those only. There were no *obiter dicta* in his book; he refrained carefully from travelling outside the record; and whatever light might have been thrown on a given matter by facts known to himself, but not presented in the case before him, he confined himself to suggesting those conclusions only which might fairly be deduced from the premises. Thus he permitted himself to express an opinion of Gen. McClellan's capacity as a commander, so far as that could be determined by his relation to the army under Pope, whose failure it was Mr. Ropes's special province to investigate. He did not examine that commander's achievement at Antietam, or assume to offer an exhaustive and final judgment on his whole military career. As for other Generals who may have been more or less conspicuous on other fields or at other epochs of the war, but who had no immediate connection with Gen. Pope's campaign in Virginia, their names are not so much as mentioned in Mr. Ropes's pages. The author of the present volume pursues a different course, but although the results may be more interesting to the general reader, who is apt, we suspect, to be piqued, if not bored, by the resolute maintenance of a sober, cautious, strictly judicial attitude, we doubt whether thoughtful persons will receive an equally profound impression of trustworthiness. Gen. Palfrey's judgment upon a given man is manifestly based on all the facts of his career as the author understands them; but inasmuch as he adduces only that section of the facts pertinent to the campaign under review, the reader cannot scrutinize all the evidence for himself, and test the conclusion drawn from it. In what is said, for instance, of McClellan, it is clear that Gen. Palfrey has in view not merely the battle of Antietam, with regard to which alone the reader can correct or verify his judgment, but the whole period of that commander's connection with the Army of the Potomac. Some of his pages, too, bristle with *obiter dicta*, in which the writer delivers *ex cathedra* his opinions touching Generals who have no relation whatsoever to the subject of his book. Not only do such incidental expressions of belief, unaccompanied as they are by a shred of the evidence on which they may be founded, fail to carry much weight to the minds of men accustomed to draw inferences for themselves, but they engender a disposition to scan narrowly, not to say distrustfully, all conclusions proffered by one who is so ready and excursive in the publication of his opinions. All we mean, after all, is that Gen. Palfrey's mind does not seem to have the judicial habit, and is to that extent less qualified than his immediate predecessor for historical writing. We are far from denying, however, that the power of lucid, vivacious, interesting narration still counts for a great deal in historical composition, of which, indeed, it supplied the archetype, and for Gen. Palfrey's unusual merit in this respect we owe him grateful acknowledgments.

The defects of Gen. Palfrey's method may be illustrated by extracts from his comments on the battle of Antietam. Thus we read of Sumner that "he displayed the same want in his nature which he had displayed before at Fair Oaks," and of McClellan that "he made the same mistake which he had made before at Gaines's Mill." Now, the facts relating to Fair Oaks and Gaines's Mill are not spread before the reader, and Gen. Palfrey has no right to assume that they are more, or less, familiar than those which he has just been at great pains to set forth. Regarded merely as rhetoric, such allusions recall the similes ascribed by "Hudibras" Butler to a poor poet, "which invariably leave the sense a good deal darker than it was before." The author can see little to praise in McClellan's conduct at the battle of Antietam. He thinks that Lee might have been well nigh annihilated on the 17th of September, and that, at all events, the battle should have been renewed on the succeeding day. This is an opinion which the author has a perfect right to express, because the evidence on which he forms it is laid before us, and we, on our part, are at liberty to draw different conclusions from his facts. We believe that no man has ever questioned McClellan's veracity, and so far as we can discern, Gen. Palfrey does not dispute his statement that at eight o'clock on the morning of the 17th an order was sent to Burnside to carry the stone bridge crossing the Antietam, directly in front of his troops, to gain possession of the heights beyond, and to advance along their crest upon Sharpsburg and its rear. "There is excellent reason," says the author, "for believing that this order did not reach Burnside till about nine." The "excellent reason" is not stated; but, assuming its existence, and supposing the movement ordered to have been begun at nine, how did it happen that six hours elapsed before Burnside's troops could be got across a creek and made ready for the projected advance on Sharpsburg? How was McClellan to suppose that the commander of his right wing, who had had ample time to obtain information, who had, in fact, been ordered to obtain it nearly twenty-four hours before, had totally neglected to acquaint himself with the country immediately in his front, so that one division actually could not find the bridge that lay beneath its nose, while another wasted hours in searching for an easily accessible and well-known ford? Gen. Burnside had been intrusted with two corps, the First and Ninth, and his commanding officer was justified in believing that at least one of these, the Ninth, would have arrived on the field of battle by twelve o'clock, if not an hour earlier. As a matter of fact, Burnside's troops were not all across the bridge until 3 P. M., when the fighting on the part of the Federal troops commanded by Sumner and Franklin was all over. Gen. Palfrey acknowledges that, with the abundant knowledge now forthcoming, there cannot be a shadow of a doubt that, had the Ninth Corps been thrown vigorously into action early on the 17th, Lee's army must have been shattered, if not destroyed. In view of this admission, and of the facts above mentioned, we cannot see why Gen. Palfrey, who is usually so outspoken, should hesitate to charge Burnside with the partial frustration of McClellan's plans, and to sternly hold him responsible for the shortcomings which saved Lee from destruction. Gen. Palfrey says the question of Burnside's loyalty to his commander "is too large a one for discussion here." To us it seems a much smaller question than that concerning the capacity and conduct of Gen. McClellan. Apropos of Burnside, however, there is a significant admission which we quote: "Between the utmost putting forth of the powers of an able and energetic man, and the lukewarm use of the powers of a commonplace and sluggish man, there is a vast difference, and the small results accomplished by Burnside on McClellan's left may readily be understood without any imputation of disloyalty by those who think that they see in his whole career that he had mistaken his vocation, and that it was a misfortune for the country that he was ever promoted beyond the rank of Colonel." So much for Burnside's neglect or incapacity to obey orders on Sept. 17, and Gen. McClellan's consequent inability to derive all the advantages from his plan of battle which he may reasonably be held to have anticipated. Now, one word as to the failure to attack Lee again on the 18th. Gen. Palfrey cannot find a word of apology for this act of nonfeasance, although he inadvertently supplies in the course of his narrative an ample justification. What must have been the condition on the 18th of our troops, which, under Sumner and Franklin, had seen such desperate fighting and incurred such grievous loss, while Burnside, who had done nothing, and suffered next to nothing, was, on the same day, clamoring for help, and making what our author calls "far from plucky representations" until McClellan directed that Morell's division should be sent to his assistance? "Late in the afternoon," says Gen. McClellan, subsequently alluding to this matter, "I found that, although he had not been attacked, Gen. Burnside had withdrawn his own corps to this side of the Antietam, and sent over Morell's division alone to hold the opposite side." Our author seems surprised that Gen. McClellan allowed this extraordinary proceeding to pass without comment; but what could he have done? It was already notorious that Burnside was intriguing with the Washington politicians, and that he had more influence with the War Department than the General commanding was demonstrated not long afterward by the deplorable blunder that put him in McClellan's place.

Here we may mention that the author completely exonerates Gen. Fitz-John Porter from the charge of neglect or misconduct of any kind in connection with this battle. "Porter," he says, "has been blamed for inaction at Antietam, but absolutely without reason. The commander of one of several corps acting together cannot do as he likes, or according to his individual judgment. He must take his orders from the Commander-in-Chief, and this is precisely what Porter did. His duty at Antietam must have been trying and mortifying, but he did it faithfully." In this conclusion we are able to heartily concur, and we regret sincerely that a gallant officer should have suffered so long from unjust aspersion.

We observe that the author of this monograph, notwithstanding the rigor of his criticism on the conduct of the battle of Antietam by the Union General, acknowledges frankly that "McClellan was the best commander the Army of the Potomac ever had." After recognizing his capacity and energy as an organizer, and pronouncing him an excellent strategist, and in many respects an excellent soldier, he admits that McClellan "was oftener successful than unsuccessful with his troops, and so conducted affairs that they never suffered heavily without inflicting heavy losses upon their adversaries." This, however, is by no means the extent of Gen. Palfrey's concessions. That "no one would think for a moment of comparing Pope or Burnside or Hooker with McClellan," is taken as a matter of course. He goes on to intimate that "the great service which Meade rendered his country at Gettysburg, and the elevated character of the man, are adverse to too close a scrutiny of his military ability." But the most interesting passage in this volume is the following comparison of McClellan with Grant, which, as the reader will observe, is turned decidedly to the advantage of the former. "As for Grant, with his grim tenacity, his hard sense, and his absolute insensibility to wounds and death, it may well be admitted he was a good General for a rich and populous country in a contest with a poor and thinly peopled one; but let any educated soldier ask himself what the result would have been if Grant had only had Southern resources and Southern numbers to rely on and use, and what will the answer be?" Gen. Palfrey goes on to point out that it was "when the Confederacy was young and fresh and rich and when its armies were numerous, that McClellan fought a good, wary, damaging, respectable fight against it. He may not have been so quick in learning to attack as Joe Johnston and Lee [illegible] [illegible]." "But," says our author, "South Mountain and the Antietam [illegible] [illegible] and with long possession of command [illegible] might fairly have been expected of him." Not to mention such lamentable failures as Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, of which McClellan would have been quite incapable, Gen. Palfrey confesses his belief that with McClellan in command the army of the Potomac would never have seen such dark days as those which Grant inflicted on it in the Wilderness and at Cold Harbor.

When we consider the tone of these comments, which on the whole are careful and [illegible], and recall the like temper of the companion volumes on the "Peninsular Campaign" and on the "Army Under Pope," we can see that this new series will be valuable on the civil war, will do much to dispel the cloud of misconception and [illegible] which for some time obscured to the eyes of [illegible] the reputation and the [illegible] of McClellan. We [illegible] with truth [illegible] what [illegible] commander, that through a storm [illegible] war [illegible] rude, his virtues and achievements are shining forth large and clear, and that his fame is fast coming to be universally cherished as one of the precious possessions of his country.

M. W. H.

POEMS WORTH READING.

A Prologue for Oscar.

My name is Wilde; and I do entertain
Of wild ideas the wildest. In my brain
Is a perennial fount of sublime thought—
Far reaching aims such as are only caught
In the rapt souls of those who dreaming lie
Lost in the mists of their immensity.
The darling poets of the rising race
Seek but to dwell in an æsthetic space,
Their drink, the nectar of the inner fire,
Their food, the ambrosial product of the lyre;
To be all soul, all heart, and never mind
The wants, the woes, the throes of human kind.
Those are beneath our taste—we loftier reach.
I am high Art's apostle come to teach
The dull benighted mortals of the world
The last new craze we've from our brain unfurl'd;
To help them scale the empyrean heights
Of fancy's weird, enthusiastic flights;
To live with ease in Art's entrancing bowers
'Mid dulcet strains and soft perfume of flowers;
To deck the person with the utterest grace,
To walk with mincing gait and simpering face;
To hold the sunflower rather than the rose
Hath fragrance more delicious to the nose;
To pose, to act, to talk, as if to show
We really can't express the half we know:
The Ahs! the Ohs! the interjections fraught
With the intensity of meaning naught.
The common language of this sphere mundane
Is for our utterance utterly too plain:
So we engraft it with a higher tense
To give expression to the utter sense.
We're moving forward in a backward race,
Reviving old things with a newer grace;
Raising new fashions from the ancient styles,
Refurbishing them o'er with modern wiles.
Things odd, grotesque, in any corner found,
In air, on earth, or even under ground,
All that is old, except old shoes and gloves,
Are dear and quaint and very sweet and loves;
Such the vocabulation of these times,
With which we sprinkle all our speech and rhymes.
Old gold's the rage, I golden visions see,
If at my rate you'll only value me,
Then come and gaze on Art's and Nature's child,
And hand your dollars out to Carte and Wilde.

Sighs of the Inner Brotherhood.

From the Detroit Free Press.

O, to be utterly utter,
Quite too refined an æsthete,
Speaking in words and phrases
Webster declared obsolete.

O, to be robed in a meal sack
Straight from my head to my feet,
Having its classical outline
Marred by no ruffle or pleat.

O, to eat nothing but rose leaves,
Humming birds' wings, and dew.
O, to prefer cracked china,
Battered and banged, to new.

O, to learn how to admire
Japanese fans in a row,
Sunflowers blazing above them,
Old fashioned dishes below.

O, to learn what is a dado,
What is a plaque, a scroll;
Why is a noseless teapot
More than a brand new bowl?

I wonder if reaching after
The utterly unknown too
Is utter, intense completeness?
I certainly wish I knew.

PAUL CARSON.

The King's Statue.

From the Boston Post.

Trembling, they told the King the startling news:
"The men of Königgratz your rule deny;
To your commands obedience refuse,
Your messengers they threaten and defy."

Bohemia's haughty monarch choked with ire.
Cried he: "I'll teach these knaves to disobey!
Summon my arms! Scourge the town with fire!
Seize on their leaders! Death to them! Away!"
As he commanded, so 'twas done. That town,
To the last dregs, the cup of sorrow quaffed.
Those who had dared rebel were trampled down,
And, in his triumph, the fierce monarch laughed.

Then, that the conquered never should forget
Their King; that he might flaunt before their eyes
A vain reminder of his power, he set
A leaden statue of himself, in size
Gigantic, in the centre of the town,
And day by day the people saw it there,
Towering above them, with a sullen frown,
And a drawn sword that seemed to say, "Beware!"

And so the years rolled on. The monarch's yoke
Daily more galling grew, until, at last,
Once more the people their harsh fetters broke,
And in the ring of war the gauntlet cast.
"This time," the monarch cried, "myself shall lead
A band to hunt these jackals to their den!
And may I never have a friend in need,
If I leave one of them to snap again!"

He found the rebel throng not unprepared;
They manned the strong walls, eager for the fray.
Thrice in assault his forces hardly fared;
Spite his best efforts, he was held at bay.

When bullets in the town grew scarce, their plate
The people gave as freely as 'twere dross;
So that it told the monarch of their hate,
They gave it gladly, careless of the loss.
At last e'en that supply was gone, and then,
Soon as their galling fire was forced to halt,
They saw the tyrant once more mass his men,
Ready to lead, himself, the grand assault.
Within the walls reigned terror and dismay.
But hark! What words above the tumult ring?
"We yet may keep the enemy at bay!
Here's lead! Behold! the statue of the King!"

A joyous shout! And quick the image falls!
A thousand eager hands the work perform!
And as the foe comes on, a shower of balls
Beats on his ranks, which melt beneath the storm.
The columns stagger 'neath the leaden rain;
They halt and waver, then, all shattered, flee,
Leaving their monarch lying midst the slain.
Won is the battle! Königgratz is free!

Companions.

From the Banner of Light.

Smile farewell to sorrow,
Give to joy good morrow,
And charge him to continue
The quiet reign within you.

Smile farewell to Gladness,
Take the hand of Sadness,
And wistfully beseech her
To be your tender teacher.

So shall both befriend you,
And to the grave attend you;
There Sorrow from you sever,
Joy go with you ever.

Sorrel.

From the United Irishman.

Musing to-night on former years,
The war unto my eyes appears,
And all its memories—hopes and fears—
My mind goes back to Sorrel.

That faithful war steed's now no more,
That me through dangers safely bore,
Yea, through the raids and battles' roar;
For dauntless was good Sorrel.

When the war ended, his fine head
He laid upon earth's chilly bed,
And soon he slumbered with the dead;
And so breath left poor Sorrel.

Why did he so ignobly die?
He that so oft heard bullets fly,
While shells burst through the sulphurous sky;
Ay, why did they spare Sorrel?

Stout horse! he bore me o'er the soil
On many a weary march of toil,
While the hot sun made the blood boil;
But through it all went Sorrel.

He oft has chased guerrilla bands
O'er ditches wide and swampy lands,
And helped to fetter traitors' hands;
For swift was my good Sorrel.

He, too, has charged with flying feet,
And followed up the dire retreat,
Where the rebels got so badly beat;
Ay, you were there, brave Sorrel!

Poor horse! you're now at peace. The strife
Of man no more affects your life,
That with all sadness was rife;
And so good night, brave Sorrel!

EDWARD S. CREAMER.

Kate.

From the United Irishman.

Yes, that's her picture!
She was—say forty.
Winning? Yes, as a girl of twenty.
We met under the shadow of a palace.
Pretty? More than pretty, and all woman.
[illegible] Yes, as black as Cleopatra's;
[illegible]
That black eyes meant lasting love.
[illegible]
Summer and forest
She was just splendid—
Willowy and graceful as a fawn.
It was a dream,
Such as agents always have.
Yes, we met again in our own land.
Was it a marriage? No.
Loving more than ever, she said,
Under great oaks
That grew amid the fragrance of rare flowers.
In the twilight we parted for a time.
As I went down the lovely road
She sang, "Good-by, sweetheart."
[illegible]
[illegible]
Ay, me [illegible] tender things of those we hate!

The Love of an Honest Man.

There's many a thing that the maidens wish
As they journey along in life,
As they take their part in the busy world,
And share in its cares and strife;
Perhaps they wish for a cosey house,
With furniture spick and span—
But best of the whole, they care the most
For the love of an honest man.

You, pretty maiden, whoe'er you are,
In palace or humble cot,
Whether your life is fair and bright,
Or trial and toil your lot,
Whether your name is Flora May,
Or homely Mary Ann,
You will [illegible] that love—
The love of an honest man.

O, a maiden may prize her ornament set,
Or [illegible] of velvet [illegible],
Or [illegible] a house of costly build,
With carpets of velvet pile,
But the greatest blessing to woman's life—
Let her pass it while now she can—
From her golden locks to her silver hairs,
Is the love of an honest man.

MAUD MILLER.

NOTES FROM THE FARMERS' CLUB.

A Complete Account of the Horse Interrupted by the Impatience of Members.

The Farmers' Club did not seem altogether like itself at the last meeting. Where there had been joy there was gloom, and there was a trifle of misunderstanding. It was with the sincerest concern and regret that the club heard of the serious illness of its President, Dr. Heath. Everybody who knows him knows that he is a gentleman, who rejoices in human society as he finds it, who sets a worthy example of tolerance and kindliness, who is wholly free from the perplexities which a selfish vanity entails, who takes a friendly buffet from a merrymaker in the spirit in which it is given, and who has no enemy whom it is worth the while of a wise man to consider. It was announced by Farmer Martin that the Chair had been dangerously ill with pneumonia, but that now there was no doubt of his pulling through. A resolution of sympathy was unanimously passed by the Club, and the expression of its concern and of its hope in his speedy full recovery was ordered to be conveyed to the ailing President.

In the regard of misunderstanding, there was some of it between Farmer Garrish and the club, and, again, one of the farmers expressed a wish to the reporter of these meetings for THE SUN that he would touch upon the peculiarities of individual farmers "more lightly." A misunderstanding is specifically implied in this farmer's request. Especial care has been taken that these reports should not be heavy, and that they are heavy has never been intimated by any person whatsoever before. If there ever should occur an instance in which the commonplace and uninteresting expressions of the farmers find their way into THE SUN's reports, it is hoped by the reporter that his attention will be remorselessly drawn to the fact, and he pledges himself to be cautious against a second commission of the offence. The Farmers' Club is said to be the oldest club organization in this country. It is an appurtenance of the American Institute, and Dr. Horace Greeley was at one time a zealous member. For the very reason that most of those who belong to it have passed their lives in the city, that the furrows turned by their ploughs have been struck in metropolitan soil, and that the crops which they have garnered have sprung from mercantile bargain and professional pursuit, they are interesting in a superior degree. They have an agricultural knowledge born of the town, and a horticultural acquaintance bred of an extended communion with their fellow men. They deserve, more than farmers from the country would deserve, to be treated with an especial care; and the complaining farmer did that which was supererogatory when he enjoined upon the reporter to "touch the farmers lightly." Lightly shall they ever be touched; joyously shall their chronicle be written.

The Poet Cutter, Farmer Lambert, and Farmer Crane were away. Farmer Garrish was to read the paper of the day, upon "The Horse." As he entered the room he was accompanied by a body servant, who bore in his arms a vast pile of books of reference, including a city directory. The body servant, who looked as if he were about to perish with apoplexy, dumped the books in a chair on the platform amid the applause of the club, and stood panting. The farmer carried in his arms a stack of manuscript sufficient in quantity to furnish forth a volume the size of Webster's Unabridged Dictionary. The glossy hair and whiskers of the farmer were scrupulously brushed and arranged, his frock coat was buttoned in the style set by Wendell Phillips, and his eye gleamed in pleasurable anticipation. Some farmer in a remote corner of the room exclaimed, "Oh, Lord!" when he saw the books and the manuscript appertaining to Farmer Garrish, but there is no proof that the tone of the exclamation was not indicative of astonishment rather than of despair. The essayist sat with his legs crossed and tried not to look enthusiastic while the routine business of the club was put through.

When everything was ready, Farmer Garrish gracefully and with great dignity ascended the platform.

If the small boys of Baxter street or the opaque Chinese laundrymen who treated the eminent farmer with levity and indifference during his recent visit to the Five Points, in the interest of a scientific understanding of the opium habit, had seen him in the act of facing the Farmers' Club, they could not have failed to be impressed with a sense of the exalted station which he occupies, and would either have whooped in uncouth and jubilant approval, or maintained the silence of profound awe. The Chair vacated the desk in order that the farmer might deposit his manuscript upon it. The courtesy was gracefully accepted, and the manuscript was deposited with a loud thud. The essayist then arranged the well-kept locks in front of his ears, touched rapidly the several features of his face with his silk pocket handkerchief, saw to it that his glossy whiskers stood well out, placed a hand in one of the rear pockets of his frock coat, saluted the Chair and his fellow members, and began the reading of his paper upon "The Horse."

The farmer said that all previous remarks made before the club upon the horse had been shallow, inadequate, and unsatisfactory. In order to set the horse right before the club, the farmer had kindly consented to procure an essay which should be comprehensive, and which, taking up the horse at the beginning, should follow him step by step down to the most recent period of his recorded and tabulated history. This had proved to be a subject of vast scope, and after two weeks of unintermitted labor the essayist had decided to divide his paper into two parts, and to occupy two sessions of the club—instead of one, as he had at first contemplated—in its reading.

At this announcement there was a sensation, and a voice remarked that one paper was enough. The essayist, who was plainly actuated by the kindliest and most benevolent feelings toward the club, evinced, as was natural, both surprise and annoyance at this rude reception of a proposition to do his fellow members a favor; but he recovered himself, and continued his address.

There was no doubt, Farmer Garrish said, that the horse existed before the flood, and in South America there have been recently dug up antediluvian horse bones of enormous size. No mention is made of a horse among the animals in the ark, and Abraham did not make a present of a horse to Pharaoh; but Joseph, a very wise man, made a corner in corn, of which horses ate, and this is the first mention of the horse in sacred or profane history. One of the Oriental kings had 40,000 horses from Egypt, and this was an enormous number of horses to be in the possession of one man. The Latin word for horse is the generic name of an animal that has a single digit. There is a tradition in the East that Adam chose the horse as the most beautiful of animals, whereupon God said, "You have chosen that which is a glory to you, and which will be a glory to your children." Hence the love of the Arabian for his horse.

At this point, unfortunately, the essayist lost the run of his manuscript, and after turning and returning his sheets for several minutes (in the course of which process they became hopelessly mixed, many voices volunteering the injunction to "Hurry up, Doctor!" meantime) finally seized the first sheet that came to hand, and in a somewhat confused and spasmodic manner said: "I will now come to the Morgan horse."

It was a very careful and detailed account which the farmer gave of this horse, and he held up before the club a number of fine cuts contained in the books, which were too small to be seen by the members in general, but which the Chair inspected with interest and appeared cordially to approve. It was while the essayist was busily engaged in searching the books for the purpose of finding more of these interesting pictures that a voice cried, "Time!" and the club began to pound with great vigor upon the floor. When the applause had died away, the essayist said that the large horses which draw the brewers' wagons in this city are fond of beer, and that some of them will not begin their day's work until they have been supplied with a pailful. The [illegible] horse will continue at a pull until he drops dead, but none of the horses on our streets have ever been known to display a spirit [illegible]. The car horses are more refined [illegible] and have a better conception of [illegible] will prove [illegible].

At this point a very large farmer [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible]

The Rev. [illegible] from Maryland [illegible]

[illegible]

The Chair [illegible]

The Chair [illegible] few remarks [illegible] the essayist [illegible].

A resolution [illegible] was proposed by Farmer Martin and unanimously adopted.

Brief and [illegible] addresses [illegible] were made by Farmer Trimble [illegible]. Farmer [illegible] Maryland, after which the club adjourned.